



AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY



## Incorporating Infection Prevention and Control into an Emergency Preparedness Plan

Emergency preparedness plans capture a nursing home's approach to meeting the health, safety, and security needs of staff and residents during an emergency or disaster. The written emergency preparedness plan should be a comprehensive plan that includes a risk assessment based on an all-hazards approach, a communication plan, an emerging infectious diseases component, a training and testing program, and policies and procedures based on each section of the plan. Your facility's infection preventionist should be included in the planning, development, and revising of the emergency preparedness plan. Facilities should conduct annual and as-needed reviews of these documents to keep the content current and provide training to staff annually. This resource provides guidance on the critical components of a nursing home's emergency preparedness plan but does not supersede or override any regulatory requirements.

- The **risk assessment** must address potential events based on the facility's geographic area (e.g., flooding, fire, epidemic, pandemic) and include plans for residents' physical limitations, resident placement (e.g., to reduce the spread of infectious diseases), and residents who are away from the facility (e.g., medical appointment, family visit) at the point of the emergency.
- The **comprehensive plan** focuses on preparing for emergencies or disasters the facility could experience. For emergencies or disasters beyond a facility's capabilities, the plan should outline coordination with other healthcare facilities and the local community. The plan should also account for emergency staffing strategies.
- The **communication plan** records current contact information for residents, family members, caregivers, staff, physicians, volunteers, and service providers (e.g., receiving hospitals, transportation companies, and linen services) for use by nursing home leadership in the event of an emergency or disaster. It should also include contact information for organizations such as local, state, tribal, regional, Federal agencies, and emergency preparedness staff; the state licensing and certification agency; and the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. The plan must also document who will contact these individuals and describe the primary and alternative plans for communication during an emergency.
- The **emerging infectious diseases component** of the emergency preparedness plan should incorporate these elements:
  - Planning for emerging infectious diseases including:
    - Novel outbreaks.
    - Biohazardous waste.
    - Bioterrorism.
    - Pandemic flu.
    - Highly communicable diseases like Ebola, Zika virus, SARS, or COVID-19.



- A staff designee to monitor Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state and local public health agency websites for guidance and recommendations during an outbreak.
- Steps to maintain a surveillance and reporting system specific to an outbreak.
- A plan for annual training and onboarding education related to emerging infectious diseases.

## Additional Resources

- [Long Term Care Requirements – Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\) Emergency Preparedness Final Rule](#)  
Resource from the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) to support providers and suppliers with complying with the Emergency Preparedness Final Rule.
- [Updated Guidance for Emergency Preparedness – Appendix Z of the State Operations Manual](#)  
Expanded guidance about emerging infectious diseases.
- [Guidance for Emergency Preparedness – Appendix PP of the State Operations Manual](#)  
Guidance to long-term care facility surveyors on regulations including F838 Facility Assessment, F880 Infection Control, and F882 Infection Preventionist.
- [Emergency Preparedness Requirements for Medicare and Medicaid Participating Providers and Suppliers](#)  
Resources to support compliance with the four core elements of the CMS Emergency Preparedness Rule.
- [Emergency Preparedness Exercises](#)  
Information from FEMA on emergency preparedness and example exercise tools nursing homes can use and adapt in preparation for emergencies.
- [Sample Disaster Preparedness Letter to Families](#)  
Sample letter nursing home administrators may use to communicate with families to request updated emergency contact information as part of the facility's emergency preparedness plan.
- [Sample Policy for Emergent Infectious Diseases for Skilled Nursing Care Centers](#)  
AHCA/NCAL guidance for long-term care providers on how to prepare for infectious diseases that have the potential to pose a significant public health threat to residents, families, and staff.



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